



Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

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For Immediate Release April 28, 2014

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THE TIME IS NOW TO MOVE FORWARD ON TRANSIT

The time is now to move forward on transit.

What has been termed by the media as a “squabble” over a transit bidding process between the County Board and the County Executive is instead a clear and simple difference of opinion over how Milwaukee County will move forward on transportation and deliver transit services.

The goal is to provide the best value and service for riders. We need to work together to accomplish that objective. Milwaukee County residents, transit riders and businesses cannot wait any longer for a better way to provide the best transit services.

What we need is for the County Executive to take immediate action and re-open the bid for transit. As Chairman of the Transportation, Public Works and Transit Committee, I have called for such action. Three other supervisors have joined me in this call. But so far the call has fallen on deaf ears.

The administration can issue a bid at any time without Board action. Again, this action should be taken for transit services immediately. But the administration has not yet acted to re-open the bid process.

This situation requires some explanation. After appeals were filed, the original process was found to be flawed by the Administrative Determination Review Committee. The Committee engaged in an exhaustive and thorough review before finding the process flawed. The administration now can correct the errors, and we can move forward with a new bid process.

But the County Executive has refused to issue a new transit bid unless the appeal process is changed. It would seem, then, that he is holding transit services hostage unless the way the County reviews contracts is changed.

In addition, he has proposed that a Chicago-based management consultant firm be paid a quarter million dollars to make recommendations on transit. He wants a sole source contract for this consultant. There has been a lack of communication over this consultant, and the question arises: Are we wasting taxpayer dollars to pay for someone to tell him what he wants them to tell him?

He didn't like the outcome of a very thorough process through which the ADRC found the transit bid process to be flawed, and now he wants to change that process instead of correcting the mistakes that were made. This is not transparent; he's trying to pick and choose when he issues a new bid based upon a threat that he won't rebid it unless he gets his way.

This is about the integrity of the review process and the way that the County reviews appeals through an open and transparent process.

He wants the Board to engage in ‘best practices’ for transit, yet he can engage in such practices by fixing the flawed bid process. He is trying to handcuff the ridership of Milwaukee County with his demands.

We need to work together as a team. The Board is ready to work with the County Executive to maximize service and efficiency to the transit system. We are not “squabbling” over something as important as our transit system, and I want to thank the ADRC committee members and Corporation Counsel for their hard work and dedication in this review process.

The time is now for us to come together and find the best way to move forward. Public transit is vital to growing our local economy, and we are looking for the most efficient, modern, and reliable way for our residents to get around our county. The transit system is an engine for economic development. Let’s not harm that engine.

The County Executive can issue a transit bid at any time. He needs to issue one as soon as possible so that riders, businesses and taxpayers can depend on a cost-effective, efficient transit system.

Let’s do what’s best for riders and taxpayers. Let’s work together.

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